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**Ohio EPA Requests Recognition of Improved Air Quality in Marietta:
Public Hearing to be Held Feb. 16**

The State of Ohio plans to ask U.S. EPA to officially recognize that air quality in Washington County meets the 1997 federal fine particulate standard. Washington County is part of the Parkersburg, W.Va., and Marietta metropolitan area.

An Ohio EPA public hearing to take comments on the proposal will be held on Feb. 16, 2012. The hearing will begin at 3 p.m. at the Marietta Library, 614 5th St.

Air quality data from 2008-2010 shows that the Parkersburg-Marietta area meets the fine particulate matter standard. When asking for redesignation, states are required to demonstrate that the metropolitan area will be able to maintain compliance with the fine particulate standard for 10 years. Current national, state and local air pollution controls to limit particulate matter-causing emissions will enable the area to maintain the air quality. These include lower emissions from coal-burning power plants, additional controls on diesel-powered vehicles and enforcement efforts.

The proposed redesignation request affects Washington County in Ohio. West Virginia would need to submit a separate request to U.S. EPA to redesignate counties in its state associated with this area.

The national fine particulate standard regulates tiny particles, about 1/30th the diameter of a human hair, that can lodge deep in human lungs. Particulate matter has been associated with health issues such as heart attacks, chronic bronchitis, asthma attacks and missed days of school and work.

Comments on the redesignation proposal can be submitted until the close of business on Feb. 16, by email or mail to [Jennifer Dines](#), Division of Air Pollution Control, Ohio EPA, P.O. Box 1049, Columbus, Ohio, 43216-1049. The [proposal](#) is available online or by calling Ohio EPA's Division of Air Pollution Control at (614) 644-2270.

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